lessened by the discovery of this fibre on the whole alimentary canal of the Tench* (*Tinca vulgaris*), after I had observed that this is not the case in some other cyprinoid fishes.

Such facts tend to weaken the value in systematic zoology of the character afforded by the muscular sheath of the œsophagus. But whatever structure proves constant cannot be devoid of importance, however difficult the explanation may be; and, so far as my limited observations have gone, it is always easy to distinguish between certain orders of Mammalia, and these from birds and reptiles, simply by the muscular fibre of the œsophagus. For example, in the Quadrumana the striped muscular fibre stops short of the cardia, while in the Rodentia this fibre extends quite to that part of the stomach, as has been more particularly described of these and other vertebrates in the 'Proceedings' of this Society (1842, p. 63 *et seq.*).

Hence it seems desirable to add this character, for as much as it may be worth, to the descriptions already known respecting such Mammalia as may have a questionable position in systematic zoology. The Aye-Aye is one of these; for it has been alternately placed among the Rodentia and Quadrumana. And by the courtesy of Mr. Flower I have examined for striated muscle about an inch of the cardiac end of the œsophagus of this animal, preserved in spirit of wine. The results were entirely negative. Not a single striped muscular fibre appeared, although the whole thickness of the œsophagus was examined, from the outer part of the preparation to the plaster with which it had been artificially distended; in short, nothing of muscular tissue but the smooth variety could be found. And thus, so far as regards this point, the œsophagus of the Aye-Aye is as unlike that of Rodentia as it is like that of Quadrumana—a fact which tends to support the latest and now general conclusion as to the affinities of this singular animal.

2. On Venezuelan Birds collected by Mr. A. Goering. By P. L. Sclater, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., and Osbert Salvin, M.A., F.L.S.—Part III.†

(Plate XVIII.)

Mr. Anton Goering's present collection was principally formed in the vicinity of the Lake of Valencia, into which district he has made

* Since this fact first came to my knowledge, through the last edition of Professor Beale's excellent work on the Microscope, in which Weber is quoted as the observer, I have examined the intestines of the Tench, and found the striated muscular fibre on the greater part of its alimentary canal. The primitive muscular fascicles of the œsophagus, stomach, and intestines presented an average diameter of $\frac{1}{1333}$ of an inch, while those of the dorsal and ventral muscles measured as much as $\frac{1}{333}$. Thus the striated fibres of the hollow muscles are only about one-fourth the thickness of those of the ordinary voluntary muscles; and this agrees with my old measurements in fishes and other vertebrates, tabulated in the 'Proc. Zool. Soc.' (1842, p. 68).

† See Part I., P. Z. S. 1868, p. 165; Part II., P. Z. S. 1868, p. 626.

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excursions from San Esteban, near Puerto Cabello, where he has been lately resident.

The collection contains altogether fifty-six species of birds, most of which are already well known as inhabitants of this part of the continent of South America. There are, however, several of great interest among them, and one in particular, a new species of Jacamar, which appears to have been hitherto undescribed.

The following extracts from a letter recently received from Mr. Goering will give the Society some information concerning the localities which he has lately explored, and the route which he is now intending to follow:—

"The Lake of Valencia seems to be a station for birds which come from the llanos and from the river-districts of the south of Venezuela. When the swamps and the llanos are dry, thousands of birds resort to it. There is, however, great difficulty in obtaining a boat for the purpose of shooting, nearly all of them having been demolished during the recent revolution. The mountains on the south of the lake (the Serro Azul of Guigue) are tenanted by the same birds as the coast-range; but the vegetation is not so rank, and the species of small size appear to be less numerous. San Esteban is situated about six English miles inland from Puerto Cabello, in a valley, through which runs a small river. Most of the birds obtained here are different from those found in eastern Venezuela, where my first collections were formed. It is singular that *Cardinalis phœniceus*, so common near Carúpano, is very rare here. I have never seen this bird on the hills, but only on the plains near the coast, which are covered with a simple vegetation of *Mimosa*, *Cactus*, &c. The *Chasmorhynchus variegatus* is common here, but only during the months of April and May. It is also abundant in the forests of Caripé; and this spot seems to be nearly the extreme limit of its western range.

"Speaking of Caripé, I may mention that the *Steatornis* is not only found in the well-known cave near that city, visited by Humboldt, but also inhabits several other caverns in the forests situated to the south-east. I visited three of these, and found one of them much larger than the cave of Caripé. It was eight English miles in extent, and every part of it seemed to be inhabited by thousands of this wonderful bird. It is very impressive when, at sunset, they leave their subterranean abodes, and make the forest resound with their shrill cries."

Mr. Goering contemplates moving his quarters into the Sierra Nevada of Merida, to which district he will proceed by Maracaibo and Zulier.

The following is a list of the species contained in Mr. Goering's present collection, to which are added notes upon such of them as call for remark:—

Name.	Locality.
1. *Donacobius atricapillus*	Lake of Valencia.
2. *Henicocichla noveboracensis*	Maruria, north of the lake.
3. *Dendrœca æstiva*	S. side of the Lake of Valencia.

	Name.	Locality.
4.	*Geothlypis æquinoctialis*	Maruria.
5.	*Hylophilus acuticaudus*	Plain of Valencia.
*6.	*Calliste cyaneicollis*	Maruria.
*7.	*Oryzoborus melas*	San Esteban.
8.	*Spermophila lincola*	Maruria.
*9.	—— *ocellata*	Plain of Valencia.
10.	*Coryphospingus pileatus*	Lake of Valencia.
11.	*Leistes guianensis*	Plain of Valencia.
12.	*Xanthosomus icterocephalus*	Maruria.
13.	*Cassidix oryzivora*	Plain of Valencia.
*14.	*Philydor columbianus*	Coast-range of Puerto Cabello.
15.	*Synallaxis albigularis*	Plain of Valencia.
16.	*Leptoxyura cinnamomea*	Lake of Valencia.
17.	*Dendrornis susurrans*	Guacara, Lake of Valencia.
18.	*Myrmotherula menetriesi*	San Esteban.
19.	*Formicarius crissalis*	San Esteban.
20.	*Arundinicola leucocephala*	Marshes in the Plain of Valencia.
21.	*Platyrhynchus albogularis*	Lake of Valencia.
22.	*Colopterus pilaris*	N. side of the Lake of Valencia.
*23.	*Euscarthmus impiger*	Guacara, Lake of Valencia.
24.	*Tyranniscus*, sp. inc	Maruria.
25.	*Pyrocephalus rubineus*	Plain of Valencia.
26.	*Milvulus tyrannus*	Plain of Valencia.
27.	*Pachyrhamphus*, sp. inc. ♀	Guacara.
28.	*Pipreola formosa*	Coast-range of Puerto Cabello.
29.	*Pyroderus orenocensis*	Puerto Cabello.
*30.	*Brachygalba goeringi*, sp. nov.	Maruria.
31.	*Ceryle amazona*	Lake of Valencia.
32.	*Nyctidromus albicollis*	Maruria.
33.	*Ramphastos ambiguus*	Guataparo.
34.	*Falco columbarius*, L.	Maruria and Lake of Valencia.
35.	*Hypotriorchis femoralis* (Temm.)	Lake of Valencia.
36.	—— *rufigularis* (Daud.)	San Esteban.
*37.	*Tinnunculus sparverius* (L.)	Plain of Valencia.
38.	*Elanus leucurus* (Vieill.)	Lake of Valencia.
39.	*Gampsonyx swainsoni*, Vig.	Maruria.
40.	*Accipiter bicolor* (Vieill.)	Maruria.
*41.	*Micrastur zonothorax*	Coast-range of Puerto Cabello.
42.	*Urubitinga meridionalis* (Lath.)	Plain of Valencia.
43.	*Circus macropterus*, Vieill.	Plain of Valencia.
44.	*Polyborus tharus* (Mol.)	Maruria.
45.	*Milvago chimango* (Vieill.)	Lake of Valencia.
46.	*Eupsychortyx sonnini* (Temm.)	Plain of Valencia.
*47.	*Crypturus strigulosus* (Temm.)	Serro Azul of Guigue.
48.	*Vanellus cayennensis* (Gm.)	Lake of Valencia.
49.	*Ægialites collaris* (Vieill.)	Lake of Valencia.
50.	*Limosa hudsonica* (Lath.)	Lake of Valencia.
51.	*Porzana carolina* (L.)	Lake of Valencia.
52.	*Parra jacana*, L.	Lake of Valencia.
53.	*Ardea cærulea*, L.	Lake of Valencia.
54.	*Butorides virescens* (L.)	Lake of Valencia.
55.	*Querquedula discors* (L.)	Lake of Valencia.
56.	*Podilymbus podiceps*	Lake of Valencia.

6. Calliste cyaneicollis (Lafr. et d'Orb.).

One example (♂, iris dark brown) from the mountains south of the Lake of Valencia, where it is said to be "not common."

This is evidently the bird described by Mr. Cassin (Pr. Ac. Sc. Phil. 1864, p. 287) as *Calliste hannahiæ*; but we are not convinced